



University of Hawaii at Manoa

Environmental Center
Crawford 317 • 2550 Campus Road
Honolulu, Hawaii 96822
Telephone (808) 948-7361

Office of the Director

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SB 2956 RELATING TO SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL

Statement for
Senate Committee on
Ecology, Environment and Recreation
Public Hearing - 1 March 1982

By
Doak C. Cox, Environmental Center
Jacquelin N. Miller, Environmental Center
Reginald Young, Civil Engineering

SB 2956 would ammend HRS Section 340A-3 relating to the disposal of solid waste. This statement on the bill has been submitted for review to the Legislative Subcommittee of the Environmental Center of the University of Hawaii but does not represent an institutional position of the University.

The purpose expressed in SB 2956 is "to provide for more flexibility in requiring delivery of solid waste to a solid waste recovery facility when an equal public interest is served by disposal of the waste as a sanitary landfill." In actuality, the amendments proposed in the bill will not increase flexibility and the effect of their tone will be to encourage the continuance of the use of sanitary landfills and reduce flexibility in planning alternatives to their use. Its introduction may be intended to reduction of the likelihood of development of a facility that is intended to result in the combination of recovery of energy from solid wastes and reduction of the volume of the residual solid wastes requiring landfill disposal such as the proposed HPOWER facility on Oahu. We recognize that objections have been raised to the proposed siting of the facility. However, the effect of passage of the bill may well be to hinder the development of such a facility at any site.

The present law recognizes that the public interest may be served by the use of a facility that results in:

- 1) recovery of reusable materials
- 2) reduction of solid waste volume
- 3) lessened demand for landfill sites, or
- 4) conservation of natural resources.

The proposed amendment would qualify the provisions so as to modify the first two conditions requiring economic operation and practicality, and restrict the third to the demand for new land fills, and so as to provide that the public interest in such a facility may be found only if at least one of the four revised conditions is met.

It should be recognized that the benefits of a facility such as the proposed HPOWER one include the production of energy primarily, rather than reusable materials, and the reduction of residual solid-waste volumes that require landfill disposal. The economics are by no means restricted to those of the recovery of materials, but include the production of energy and the reduction of needs for land fill areas at present as well as future sites. The proposed rewording of the law would seem to emphasize consideration of the individual components of economic benefits, rather than the combination.

Considering the Hawaii's present reliance on imported fossil fuels for the supply of energy, and considering the shortage of suitable landfill sites, particularly on Oahu, it seems undesirable to provide further hindrances to the development of facilities such as the proposed HPOWER in addition to the siting problem.